



**KING EDWARD VI
NORTHFIELD
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

Educational excellence for our City

ATTENDANCE POLICY

February 2022- February 2023

Adopted by the Governing Board – February 2022

To be reviewed by the Governing Board – February 2023

Signed _____ (Chair of the Governing Board)

KING EDWARD VI NORTHFIELD SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

ATTENDANCE POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Statement

The key to improving and maintaining high levels of attendance is a consistently applied whole school approach where everyone in the school community plays their part.

Northfield School for Girls is committed to providing all students with the opportunities for each individual to realise their potential. Northfield School for Girls will provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels valued and safe.

Regular and punctual attendance leads to better progress, both socially and academically. In future life, those who attend well at school find college routines and college work easier to cope with. We will challenge behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Clearly defined roles have been established within school to provide an effective system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Aims

- 1) To improve the overall percentage of students at school by making attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with Northfield School for Girls. This framework promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks by clearly defining roles and responsibilities including pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and governors.

- 2) To provide support, advice and guidance to parents, students and staff and to implement a systematic approach to utilising attendance related data raised by appropriate persons.

- 3) To liaise with internal and external agencies to support the needs of students in their attendance and education at Northfield School for Girls.

1. Definitions

1.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Absence”** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.

- An **“Authorised Absence”** as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.

- An **“Unauthorised Absence”** as:
 - No uniform
 - Looking after siblings or unwell parents.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Birthdays or shopping for trips
 - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed or extended.

- **“Persistent Absenteeism”** as:
 - Missing **10 percent** or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**. These absences may be authorised OR unauthorised.

2. Pupil expectations

- 2.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day - the minimum expectation is **97%** throughout the year.

3. Absence procedures

- 3.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. This call should be before 9:05am on EVERY day of the absence. Parents can utilise ParentMail to report absences. **School reserves the right to conduct a home visit even if we are contacted to report a pupil's absence.**
- 3.2. An automated **phone call** will be made to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. **If parents cannot be contacted and concerns are raised, school reserves the right to conduct a home visit to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.**
- 3.3. **Any unexplained absence will be coded "N"**. If an explanation is not provided in a timely manner, any "N" codes will be changed to **"O" which is an unauthorised absence. This can be used in evidence when the Fast-Track procedure is implemented.**
- 3.4. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents/carers to speak to the **Senior Learning Mentor-Attendance.**

4. Contact information

- 4.1. Parents/Carers are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details via the data checking sheet which is sent out annually.
- 4.2. Parents/Carers are responsible for updating the school if their details change.

5. Senior Learning Mentor- Attendance

- 5.1. If Pupils are persistently absent they will be referred to the **Senior Learning Mentor- Attendance** who will hold regular Attendance Review Meetings with the pupil and their parents/carers.
- 5.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the **Senior Learning Mentor** has the power to refer cases to the ELIT (Education Legal Intervention Team) who may issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

6. Lateness

- 6.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 6.2. The school day starts at **8:45am for Years 7, 8 & 9 and 8.50am for Years 10 & 11.**
- 6.3. Registers are marked at **8:50am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their Form by this time.
- 6.4. After lunch, registers are marked at **1:55pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their Form by this time.

7. Leave in Term Time

- 7.1. The Headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 7.2. The Headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 7.3. At Northfield School for Girls, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 7.4. Northfield School for Girls will carefully consider following Birmingham City Council **Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process**. This is to reduce unauthorised leave taken by pupils in term time.
- 7.5. A Pupil's absence is marked as unauthorised absence for families taking holidays within term-time. **Fixed Penalty Notices** can be issued if the following occurs:
 - a) For a minimum of 5 school days of unauthorised days AND has had 5 school days of other unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months; or
 - b) For at least 10 school days of unauthorised absence, where there have been no other unauthorised absence in the previous 12 calendar months.
- 7.6. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's attendance record will be taken into account.

- 7.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines and prosecutions.

8. Appointments

- 8.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 8.2. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, a signed note or appointment letter from the parent will be sent to the pupils' **Head of Year or Attendance Officer**.
- 8.3. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.
- 8.4. If attendance (authorised or unauthorised absences) significantly deteriorates, medical evidence will be required to enable the Headteacher to authorise these absences due to illness or medical appointments. Doctors or GP 'sick' notes are not required. Please do not request these from your GP.

9. Fast Track to Attendance Procedure

- 9.1. **Northfield School for Girls** has adopted the **Fast-Track** monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard. This process is only applied to children who are of compulsory school age. It is not applied to LAC (Looked After Children).
- 9.2. '*FAST-track to Attendance*' is an Early Help approach to improving pupil attendance which also seeks to act quickly where there is unauthorised absence. It is for all schools, academies and alternative providers. There are no specific timelines to follow, the process can be used at a time which is right for the individual pupil and schools have only one formal letter they will need to send to each parent.
- 9.3. The process aligns the thresholds for taking legal action for ongoing unauthorised absence with the Local Authority 'Code of Conduct' and the Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) process.
- 9.4. We know from Department for Education studies into the effects of absence on pupils' progress and attainment levels that absence has a statistically significant negative link to attainment – i.e. every extra day missed was associated with a lower attainment outcome. It's clear from the data that

being absent from school for any reason has an impact on a child's progress in school.

- 9.5. In terms of legal action, the Local Authority can only prosecute where there is unauthorised absence. In Birmingham this duty is delegated to the Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT).
- 9.6. The Birmingham Penalty Notice Code of Conduct states that there must be at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 12 month calendar period for legal action to be taken.

'FAST-Track to Attendance' Quick Process Guide

Concerning levels of pupil absence either authorised or unauthorised

Step One – Early help including 'Signs of Safety and Wellbeing' (3 houses form) with the child

At least one session of unauthorised absence

Step Two – Invite parents to a School Attendance Review Meeting (SARM) and hold the SARM

The pupil has further unauthorised absence since the SARM. Including the recent absences, there are now at least 10 (8 for Year 11 Pupils) sessions of unauthorised absence in total over the previous 12 calendar months

Step Three – Send 'Formal Warning Notice' to each parent individually with an up to date attendance printout and the 'School Attendance (Legal Action) - Information for Parents' leaflet

The pupil has a minimum of 10 further sessions of unauthorised absence since the Formal Warning Notice was issued. This could be, for example, within a 10 day period or 12 school weeks

Step Four – Refer to ELIT
(do not delay - refer as soon as they reach 10 further sessions)

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Pupils:

- 1) Strive for 100% attendance – only taking time off when absolutely necessary.
- 2) Arrive promptly for registration periods to avoid automated absence phone call.
- 3) Discuss any issues which might affect attendance with parents, form teacher or Head of Year.
- 4) Update the attendance graph in pupil planner as directed by their form teacher.

Role of Parents:

- 1) Contact school before 9:05am if daughter is absent, explaining why.
- 2) Ensure your daughter is able to arrive to school on time, ready for registration.
- 3) Seek medical advice from GP if daughter recurrently ill with similar symptoms.
- 4) Do not arrange holidays during term time.
- 5) Contact Year Head if suspect daughter avoiding school for any reason (problems in particular lesson, fall outs with peers, anxiety etc.)
- 6) If unclear whether daughter should attend with specific illness – contact attendance officer to discuss.

Role of Form Teachers:

- 1) Take register accurately and promptly each morning and afternoon.
- 2) Regularly spend form time discussing the overall importance of attendance and punctuality.
- 3) Use attendance data to have individual discussions with form pupils.
- 4) To use form time to get pupils to update their individual attendance graphs in their pupil planners as a fortnightly activity.

Role of Subject Teachers and Co-ordinators:

- 1) Subject teachers must take a register every lesson.
- 2) Discuss emerging patterns with the Head of Year (pupil regularly absent on Fridays, for example).
- 3) Consistently use reports and parents' evenings to highlight the detrimental impact of poor attendance on progress.
- 4) Contact parents, preferably by letter (after first liaising with Year Head), when absence prevents completion of key topics / projects.
- 5) Make regular in-class reminders about the importance of good attendance in subject lessons.

Role of the Attendance Officer

- 1) Produce weekly attendance and persistent totals for YHs, PST, DH and Head.
- 2) Meet bi-weekly with Year heads to agree to send standard stage 1 and stage 2 letters.
- 3) Maintain first day contact list and contact parents as soon as pupil on list is recorded absent.
- 4) Liaise closely with opposite number at the Edge Academy AP Free School and MM schools to ensure that any absence of pupils on placement is followed up appropriately.
- 5) Meet regularly with the Pastoral Support Team and support home visits as required.
- 6) Prepare form group attendance print-outs fortnightly and distribute to form teachers.
- 7) Report regular registration / register issues (regularly not completed etc) directly to Deputy Head.

Role of Year Heads:

- 1) Meet fortnightly with Attendance Officer to agree Stage 1 and Stage 2 interventions.
- 2) Meet fortnightly with Senior Management Team to explain interventions and plan further actions.
- 3) Prioritise encouraging an ethos of excellent attendance within their year group through rewards, praise letters and postcards, assemblies and form time activity.
- 4) Contact parents by phone prior to sending stage 1 letters.
- 5) Invite parents into school prior to sending stage 2 letters.
- 6) Monitor form teachers within their form team to ensure they perform the role allocated to them.
- 7) Make attendance central feature of Year Team Assemblies.
- 8) Use Year Group rewards budget to incentive good and improved attendance.
- 9) Refer families to the PST if attendance fails to improve after stage 2.

Role of Pastoral Support Team:

- 1) Senior Learning Mentor to conduct a home visit on the third day of absence if no reason has been provided.
- 2) Conduct home visits if pupils are absent through illness without medical evidence if required.
- 2) Arrange mentoring and monitoring of pupils who have been referred by Year Heads
- 3) Arrange for multi-agency support via Early Help Support Team where families need additional support.
- 4) Ensure Attendance Officer performs role.
- 5) Run Attendance Assemblies every term for each Year Group.
- 8) Senior Learning Mentor- Attendance will, with support from Pastoral Support Manager, will manage the Individual Attendance Plans of pupils referred after Stage 2 Head of Year intervention, devising interventions and involving external agencies as appropriate.

Role of Data Manager:

- 1) Produce half-termly attendance as part of the Pastoral Data pack, analysis attendance and persistent absence of different groups, and liaising with Deputy Head to enable reporting to Pastoral Governors sub-committee.
- 2) Support the Attendance Officer to ensure data supplied to Heads of Year etc is accurate.

Role of SMT:

- 1) Ensure Data Manager, Pastoral Support Team and Year Heads fulfil roles.
- 2) Deputy Head holds fortnightly meetings with Year heads and Pastoral Support Team Manager.
- 3) Prepare half-termly attendance reports for governors.
- 4) Use the self-evaluation and development planning cycle to prioritise attendance across the school community.
- 5) Run Attendance Assemblies for each year group once a year.
- 6) HT not to authorise non-sickness / medical absences except in extreme circumstances.
- 7) Review current data to identify trends and new interventions.

Role of Governors

- 1) To use Pastoral Governors Sub-Committee to critically examine school strategies and the role played by specific individuals.
- 2) To be aware of trends in attendance and persistent absence in the context of both the national average and similar schools.
- 3) To ensure that attendance related work is central to the school.
- 4) Participate in Governors' Support Meetings when requested.